DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 326 CG 015 499

AUTHOR Escovar, Peggy L.; Lazarus, Philip J.
TITLE Cross-Cultural Child Rearing Practices: Implications for School Psychologists.
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Development; *Child Rearing; Counseling Techniques; Counselor Role; Cross Cultural Training; *Cultural Awareness; Elementary Secondary Education; Family Relationship; Family Structure; *Hispanic American Culture; Literature Reviews; *Minority Group Children; Models; *School Psychologists

ABSTRACT

The knowledge of cross-cultural child-rearing practices to aid school psychologists is illustrated in this paper. A literature review of child-rearing practices is provided, focusing on: (1) children's social, cultural, and psychological development; (2) the school psychologist's identification of culturally bound aspects of child development; and (3) the effect of social class and degree of acculturation as moderators of other variables. Hispanic child-rearing practices are used to illustrate how school psychologists, by understanding cultural practices, can be effective instruments of educational change and knowledgeable child advocates. (JAC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED208326

CROSS-CULTURAL CHILD REARING PRACTICES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Peggy L. Escovar

Philip J. Lazarus

Florida International University

CG 015499

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Philip J. Lazarus

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CROSS-CULTURAL CHILD REARING PRACTICES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS.

Peggy L. Escovar, M.Ed.
Philip J. Lazarus, Ph.D.
Miami, Florida, USA

The need to train school psychologists to deal with the increasing number of culturally different children has become a pressing issue in many educational systems. As world events create refugee and migrant groups, a demand is placed on the educational systems of most countries to address the educational and psychological needs of children who may be linguistically and culturally different. These children bring with them not only a different language, but a wide diversity of cultural values, beliefs, customs and experiences. Therefore, school psychologists need to appreciate the cultural richness of minority group children and help structure the school environment to meet their unique needs.

It seems evident that the "zeitgeist" of the 1980's call for a redefinition of the role of the school psychologist. (Catterall, 1980; Diepold, 1979; Lolli, 1980; Reilly, 1969; Ysseldyke, 1978). Catterall (1980) discusses the potential of school psychologists to be important instruments for educational change. He states that, "school psychologists must learn to communicate with other specialists within the field to (1) inform them of the educational problems they are facing in the applied setting (2) identify those factors within the broad spectrum of psychology which have potential application within the school and (3) work cooperatively with other theoreticians and practitioners within psychology to find the best way to apply these skills and knowledge in the schools." Of particular relevance

to the school psychologist is the data base of research in the area of cross-cultural child rearing practices. It is necessary that the practioner translate this knowledge base into practical interventions in the school setting.

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate how knowledge of cross cultural child rearing practices can aid school psychologists. The study of comparative child rearing patterns offers a wide breadth of information about the social, cultural and psychological development of children. By utilizing this information, the school psychologist can help specify what aspects of child development are culturally bound and what aspects are reflections of general human development.

A review of the literature on child rearing from a cross-cultural perspective reveals two factors that frequently act as moderators of the main effects of other variables. These are social class and degree of acculturation.

Social class -- The bulk of child rearing research has lead to two conclusions: first, social class cuts across ethnic groups in determining many child rearing practices. That is, there are variations in child rearing practices that are strictly due to SES and are not discrete, vertical cultural values. Second, when social class is controlled, there remains a variation in child rearing (Kohn, 1963; Geisman and Gerhart, 1968) that can be said to be typical of a culture regardless of SES. These culture specific effects are not easily overshadowed by social class.

Degree of acculturation -- Refugee, migrant and immigrant children represent a special problem because of the gradual and differential effects of acculturation on the child and his family. The gradual process of adapting to the majority culture can differentially affect child rearing practices.

For the purposes of this paper, Hispanic child rearing practices will be used as an illustrative example. However, the practioner can study the child rearing practices of any culture and draw practical implications for school psychology. This literature will be summarized looking at three categories frequently seen in child rearing research; (1) Patterns of Autonomy (2) Patterns of Parental Authority and (3) Parental Affection.

Patterns of Autonomy -- In Hispanic families, a great emphasis is placed on dependence and less on self reliance. Rosen (1962) found Brazilian mothers telling their children what they can and cannot do. Rusmore and Kinmeyer (1976) found that Mexican American mothers were seen as strict and discouraging disagreement. Mexican mothers not only wanted to control their children's thoughts, but their movements as well. Mexican children were encouraged to play at home with siblings rather than in the neighborhood.

Minturn and Lambert (1964) in a study which compared child rearing across six cultures (U.S.A., Mexico, Philippines, Okinawa, India, Kenya) found a similar strong pattern of dependence in the Mexican family. They reported that Mexican mothers kept their children close to home and sometimes did not send them to school if the children had been bullied by more aggressive peers. When interviewed, mothers expressed a preference for the child to either play alone or with close relatives.

In a series of related findings Rusmore reports that the Hispanic family is typically very close and its members support strong emotional and physical ties. This closeness often seems to foster dependency relationships.

Padilla and Ruiz (1974) in their description of the Hispanic family also portray a strong tendency for inter-family reliance. That is, the expected response to trouble is to rely on the family system for support

rather than outside agencies. This tendency was also documented by Szapocznik, Scopetta, Aranalde and Kurtines (1978). It was noted that the success of mental health therapy with Cuban-Americans is often contingent on the inclusion of the entire family network.

Durrett, O'Bryant, and Pennebaker (1975) looked at a related variable-termed 'responsibility for own behavior.' The results indicated that Mexican-Americans placed less emphasis on responsibility for behavior than comparable groups of Anglo-Americans and Black-Americans. Mexican-American parents were more protective of their children. These results supported an earlier finding that Puerto Rican parents placed less emphasis on responsibility for their child's behavior (Cahill, 1967).

Patterns of Parental Authority -- This category includes variables on the authoritarian-egalitarian continuum. Egalitarianism can be defined as respect for the child's ideas and rights to have input into family decisions. Authoritarianism indicates that the child's opinions are not consulted and parents expect undisputed obedience.

In an extensive child rearing study by LeVine and Bartz (1979), it was found that Chicano parents significantly differed from Black-American and Anglo-American parents on the variable of egalitarianism. They failed to encourage an equal role for the child in the family. In addition, the lower the level of education, and the larger the family, the more parental authority increased.

Padilla and Ruiz (1974) describe as one of the main characteristics of the Hispanic family structure the undisputed authoritarian role of the father. The mother is seen as submissive to the husband and older sons. Men dominate their wives and overprotect their daughters, but expect a certain amount of complete independence for themselves. The attitude of strict discipline to parental authority has also been documented by Diaz-

Guerrero (1955). In response to a questionnaire statement, "The stricter the parents the better the child", it was found that Mexican-American agreed approximately 88% while Anglo-Americans agreed about 13% of the time.

However, Holtzman, Diaz-Guerrero and Swartz (1975) found that social class was an important moderating variable in determining parental attitudes towards authority. Specifically high SES mothers in both the United States and Mexico valued traits such as independence, tolerance and social concern, while low SES mothers valued strict obedience.

Use of physical punishment is an important variable in child rearing practices. Minturn and Lambert (1964) found the Mexican sample to be the highest of the six cultures studied in the use of physical punishment and verbal hostility. Anglo-Americans were the least physical and tended to rely on verbal reprimand and logic in discipline.

Parental Affection -- Rohner (1975) in his analysis of 101 societies from ethnographic studies documented a worlwide relationship between time spent as the sole caretaker of children and rejection. That is, mothers who do not share child care responsibilities with anyone, especially a grandparent, are more likely to reject their child. The Hispanic mother can rely on her extended family relationships for some of the child rearing responsibilities. This less intensive involvement seems to foster a relationship where cuddling, fondling and demonstrations of love occur more frequently. Whiting (1961) also found a similar relationship between infant indulgence and number of adults living in the household. Extended families tended to be more indulgent with their infants than nuclear families. Rohner (1975) also found that children were accepted more in households where fathers were present on a daily basis, regardless of culture.

Witkin, Dyk, Faterson, Goodenough and Karp (1962) also noted that mothers were revered as the primary source of affection in the Hispanic family. Rusmore (1976) found that mothers were seen as fostering dependency relationships with their children and valuing close, warm relationships with the family.

Minturn and Lambert (1964) found that even though Mexicans were rated highest of the six cultures in the use of physical punishment, they were rated second highest on the warmth of mother scale. Mexican mothers were rated significantly higher on parental warmth than Anglo-American mothers.

Implications -- This section represents an attempt to derive practical implications from the research on Hispanic child rearing practices for the practicing school psychologist.

1) The school psychologist needs to stress the positive values of being bicultural and bilingual in order to increase the child's self esteem.

Baty (1972) notes that teachers faced with culturally different children often respond with a sort of "acculturation shock." They are not prepared for the child's cognitive, emotional, behavioral and linguistic differences. This lack of understanding often leads to the rejection of the child. Wahab (1973) demonstrated that many teachers extend differential treatment to Mexican-American students. They interact most with Anglo-American boys, then Anglo-American girls, then Mexican-American boys and lastly with Mexican-American girls. He also found that the Mexican-American children held much higher aspirations for themselves than did their teachers. Many authors have investigated the effects that this daily differential treatment has on children (Martin, 1975; Arias, 1976; Knight, Kagan, Nelson, Gumbiner, 1978). Basically the findings are that as acculturation increases, self

esteem decreases. This trend of low self esteem has been explained by noting that often the culturally different child begins internalizing negative Anglo-American stereotypes. The child compares himself unfavorably with his Anglo-American peers (Nelson, Knight, Kagan, Gumbines, 1980). Therefore, it is important that the school psychologist identify the child that is underachieving primarily because of low self concept and cultural differences. Rather than focusing on academic remediation, the psychologist may be more successful by redirecting the teacher into a more positive interaction with the child. The school psychologist can also help develop workshops, curriculum or events that emphasize the unique richness of the minority culture. For example, Latin American week can be incorporated into the school year. This week can feature speakers, dancers, food, music, slide presentations and movies that portray the Latin-American culture in a positive light.

2) The school psychologist needs to develop independence training programs.

Research indicates that the development of achievement motivation, an important factor in school achievement (Rosen, 1959) appears to be strongly related to the amount of independence training that a child experiences early in life (Evans and Anderson, 1973). Independence training involves the parents actively encouraging self reliance by granting their children enough autonomy to make some of their own decisions and to accept responsibility for their own behavior. This, in turn, fosters a desire within the child to achieve through independent efforts to learn. It has been noted that in this factor, Hispanic child rearing patterns differ from Anglo-American patterns where parents expect more independence at earlier ages. In fact, the elementary and secondary school's structure is largely based on a sequence of classroom tasks that must be completed independently.

For dependent Hispanic students, it may be difficult, initially, to achieve within a classrom structure which assumes student initiative. In some cases these children may be referred to school psychologists, for underachievement, poor self confidence, low frustration tolerance, dependency and immaturity. The school psychologist's task becomes one of explaining to teachers the need to understand that assignments requiring total individual action may be difficult for children who have been accustomed to frequent adult intervention. It may be beneficial for the psychologist to explain these patterns of behavior as cultural differences and not necessarily deficits in the learning ability of the child. Together, the school psychologists and the teacher can then address strategies to encourage independent school work behavior and the development of self reliance.

3) The school psychologist needs to appreciate the strong familial ties in the Hispanic family and use this to the child's best advantage.

When a child is referred for a psycho-educational evaluation, the entire family, because of the emotional and physical interdependence may feel threatened. A problem with one member becomes a family problem. It behooves the psychologist to conduct a complete assessment of the social dynamics of the family. For some families, the psychologist must realize that the school is seen as threatening. These feelings may manifest themselves in various ways. During conferences, these may include defensive denial, lack of recognition of the problem, opposition to recommendations, overreaction and blaming behaviors. A great deal of trust building through frequent contacts may be necessary before the family will actually let an "outsider" help them with their problems.

Szapocznik, Scopetta, Aranalde and Kurtines (1978) believe that many behavioral and emotional problems are really a result of the whole family

structure breakdown where a child is rejecting past parental authority and the parents are assuming ineffective or culturally inappropriate roles. The most effective intervention may be to teach the whole family skills necessary to accommodate the problem, while supporting the traditional hierarchial structure. This has particular relevance to the school psychologist who must learn to appreciate the strong familial ties and work this to the child's advantage when devising intervention strategies.

In summary, by understanding the child rearing practices of a particular culture, the school psychologist can more effectively intervene within the school setting. In this way, he or she can become an instrument of educational change and a more knowledgeable child advocate.

REFERENCES

Arias, M. B. A bicultural approach to the issue of self concept assessment. Dissertation Abstracts International, 1976, (Nov.), 37, (5-A0, 2699.

Baty, R. Reeducating teachers for cultural awareness-preparation for educating Mexican American children in Northern California. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972, 137.

Cahill, I. D. Child-rearing practices in lower socioeconomic ethnic groups. Dissertation Abstracts International, 1967, 27, 3139A.

Catterall, C. D. Psychology and changing education in an international perspective. School Psychology International. June/July, 1980, 1, 4, 1-3.

Diaz-Guerrero, R. Neurosis and the Mexican family structure. American Journal of Psychiatry, 1955, 12, 6, 411-417.

Diaz-Guerrero, R. Neurosis and the Mexican family structure. American Journal of Psychiatry, 1955, 112, 6, 411-417.

Diepold, J. Roles/functions of school psychologists: An ecological perspective. Paper presented at the eighty-seventh annual convention of the American Psychological Association, New York, September 3, 1979.

Durrett, M. A., O'Bryant, S., and Pennebaker, J. W. Child rearing reports of White, Black and Mexican-American families. Developmental Psychology, 1975, 11, 871.

Evans, F. B. and Anderson, J. G. The psychosocial origins of achievement and achievement motivation: The Mexican American family. Sociology of Education, 1973, 46, 396-415.

Geisman, L. L. and Gerhart, U. G. Social class, ethnicity, and family functioning: Exploring some issues raised by the Moynihan report. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1968, 30, 480-487.

Holtzman, W. H., Diaz-Guerrero, R. and Swartz, J. D. Personality development in two cultures: A cross-cultural longitudinal study of school children in Mexico and the United States. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975.

Knight, G. P., Kagan, S., Nelson, W., Gumbiner, J. Acculturation of second and third generation Mexican children: Field independence, locus of control, self esteem, and school achievement. Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 1978, 9, 87-97.

Kohn, M. L. Social class and parent-child relationships: An interpretation. American Journal of Sociology, 1963, 68, 471-480.

LeVine, E. S. and Bartz, K. W. Comparative child-rearing attitudes among Chicano, Anglo, and Black parents. Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 1979, 1, 2, 165-178.

Lolli, A. Implementing the role of the school psychologist. Psychology in the Schools, 1980, 17, 70-75.

Martin, W. L. Cognitive performance and exposure to acculturation among children of transcient and settled out Mexican American migrants of Vermilion County, Illinois. Dissertation Abstracts International, 1975, 36 (5-A) 2943-2944.

Minturn, L. and Lambert, W. Mothers of Six Cultures: Antecedents of Child Rearing. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964.

Padilla, A. M. and Ruiz, R. A. Latino Mental Health: A Review of the Literature. DHEW Publication No. (ADM), 1974, 189.

Reilly, D. School psychology: View from the second generation. Journal of School Psychology, 1969, 151-155.

Rohner, R. P. They love me, they love me not: A world-wide study of the effects of parental acceptance and rejection. New Haven, Connecticut. HRAF Press, 1975.

Rosen, B. C. Socialization and achievement motivation in Brazil. American Sociological Review, 1962, 27, 612-624.

Rusmore, J. T. and Kinmeyer, S. L. Family attitudes among Mexican American and Anglo American parents in San Jose, California. Paper presented at the 56th annual meeting of the Western Psychological Association in Los Angeles, California, 1976.

Szapocznik, J., Scopetta, M. A., Aranalde, M., Kurtines, W. Cuban value structure; treatment implications. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1978, 46, 961-970.

Wahab, A. Z. The Mexican American child and the public school. Dissertation Abstract International, 1973 (Jul.) 34, (1-A) 74-75.

Whiting, J. W. Socialization process and personality. In F. L. Hsu (Ed.), Psychological Anthropology: Approaches to culture and personality. Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1961.

Witkin, H., Dyk, R., Faterson, J., Goodenough, D., Karp, S., Psychological Differentiation. New York: Wiley, 1962.

Ysseldyke, J. E. Who's calling the plays in school psychology? Psychology in the Schools, 1978, 15, 373-379.